

Good afternoon, My name is Trevon Stapleton, I'm a student that has been affected by Zero-Tolerance Policies.

Today i'm here to stress the importance to approve the amendments of these bills because my peers and I care about our education. Many students each year get suspended for truancy for a number of reasons but if you ask me students shouldn't be suspended at all for truancy because the objective is to get students to come to school. When students are suspended for truancy you just give them an incentive to continue not to show up for school.

I also strive the importance of having schools collect data on who is being suspended and why so that school districts gain accurate information on how their students are being suspended because students that are African American, disabled, or live in poverty are being suspended at disproportionate rates. This information will not only help school districts assess how their students are suspended but it also show how zero tolerances are doing more harm to students then good.

Last but not least before students are referred to court for truancy they should be sent to a youth assistance program(YAC) to assess why they weren't at school. I believe there should be a process in between being truant and having to go to court because when I was in 8th grade I was referred to court for missing too many days of school. During that time I developed medical issues that prevented me from attending school. After missing so many days I was suspended so when I finally was healthy enough to go back to school I couldn't due to my suspension.

In conclusion, these bills are great and will help many students but I hope that we can continue to school a better environment and give all students the equal amount of opportunity to receive an education. I would also like to see the sponsors take the next step and give school administrators the discretion to not expel students for other offenses in the current law that do not have exceptions to consider individual circumstances.

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